

Cerimónia de Doutoramento Honoris Causa
Sua Alteza, Príncipe Aga Khan
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Discurso do Reitor da Universidade NOVA de Lisboa – Professor
Doutor António Rendas

Let me start with a quotation:

“We came from different backgrounds, different cultures and races to this university. I remember being surprised at just how many kinds of patients and staff members would interact everyday here from every different colour and creed. The fact that you have as high chance of meeting a patient at Aga Khan University from Mathare slums as you have of meeting a business tycoon has taught us that quality of health care for everyone is not just a pipe dream but an ideal that we should strive towards everywhere we go”.

These words are from Dr. Joshua Kibera Chege, as part of the Kenya Valedictory Speech he delivered in the award ceremony where he received his Master in Medicine from Aga Khan University in Nairobi. The text is included in the “Aga Khan University Report 2014” which I was given last year by the President of Aga Khan University, my good friend Firoz Rasul.

What a privilege for a Rector, or a President, to be able to support such an outstanding endeavour. But, above all, what an exceptional moment we are living today paying tribute to the world leader who masterminded and nurtured this project, for the benefit of mankind: His Highness the Prince Karim al-Hussaini Agan Khan IV.

The Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia are part of the Aga Khan Development Network one of the most comprehensive contemporary development networks in the world

with three pillars: economic development, social development and culture. As Founder and Chairman of the AGKDN, the Aga Khan is truly the centre of a human chain of solidarity which crosses continents bringing progress and innovation to mankind regardless of gender, origin and religion.

The Diamond Jubilee of His Highness, which is celebrated this year, started in 11 July, at Aiglemont, and today's ceremony is indeed, symbolically, a tribute to this celebration and we are very happy, at NOVA University, that we can receive the Shia Ismaili Muslims Community for this event. It is indeed a privilege that it occurs so close to the beginning of a year of milestone announcements by the Aga Khan for a global commitment to partnerships based on the principles of ethics in action, pluralism and peace.

NOVA University, as an academic, but also as social institution, believes in the role of partnerships to improve the progress of science and education for the benefit of society at large. However, we humbly feel that the road to achieve these goals is a long one because ethics, pluralism and peace are like trees that need to be watered every day. The inspiration of our Laureate is, surely, one of the lighthouses that will help us in our pathway.

NOVA University is situated in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, on both sides of the Tagus River, making us the only Metropolitan University in a region which concentrates one quarter of the entire Portuguese population. We have *campi* in four municipalities of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area: Lisbon, Almada, Oeiras and Cascais. We are a comprehensive university covering a broad range of scientific domains from humanities to engineering, from biology to economics, from health to law. And, above all, we believe, as our mission, in the following:

Research must be performed at international level, increasingly interdisciplinary and aiming at addressing problems affecting society

Teaching must be excellent, from bachelor to master and doctoral level, competitive at national and increasingly at international level

Innovative synergies must be created between teaching and research based on interinstitutional participation and integrating different scientific cultures.

Significant contributions to social development must be made based mainly on the qualification of human resources at national and international level, giving particular attention to the countries where Portuguese is spoken.

Somos, como Universidade, uma rede, cada vez mais coesa, porque coerente, de instituições com um grau muito significativo de autonomia mas nunca esquecemos o nosso *motto* que foi proferido na frase final do discurso de tomada de posse do primeiro Reitor da NOVA, Professor Frausto da Silva: "OMNIS CIVITAS CONTRA SE DIVISA NON STABIT". É um fragmento evangélico que se encontra em Marcos, Lucas e João que se traduz por: "TODA A CIDADE DIVIDIDA CONTRA SI MESMA NÃO PERMANECERÁ" e em inglês: "ALL THE CITY DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF WILL NOT REMAIN".

A Cidade é hoje o nosso habitat e faz de todos nós cidadãos com direitos e deveres, independentemente do local onde vivemos, daquilo que fazemos e com quem nos relacionamos. Viver melhor na Cidade implica partilhar e partilhar significa participar em redes.

Numa rede, como todos sabemos, a distância que entre cada um de nós é muito pequena, quase nula, porque estamos juntos na partilha dos conhecimentos, dos afectos, dos princípios, dos valores.

As parcerias completam este modelo inclusivo porque fazem pontes entre as redes e fortalecem laços entre grupos e pessoas.

Os Portugueses são bons a criar redes, não têm sido tão bons a mantê-las e esse é, para mim, o nosso grande desafio para as próximas décadas.

Your Highness, the Portuguese are people known for their capacity to apparently wander around the world, indeed they are people who discovered part of the world, or better still, people who made a part of the world known to other parts. Very recently, I heard our beloved President of the Republic, Professor Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, saying in his very recent state visit to Mexico that Portugal is a platform open to the world and I felt proud of our history and of our increasing contemporary role in the world where we are playing a role as networkers, as we did in the past.

Your Highness, I sincerely hope that you feel at home in Portugal and that you feel that Portugal is also part of your home. Now that you are a member of our academic community and also, we hope very soon, a neighbour to this campus, I hope you are willing to consider Lisbon and particularly NOVA University as a partner in making the world better with more knowledge, more culture, more social development and, above all, peace for men and women of good will.

Welcome to NOVA